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CAPE GAZETTE

6/3/05

Replenishment work set to begin June 3 in Rehoboth Beach

By Jim Cresson

Cape Gazette staff

With weather permitting, the oceanfront replenishment project was set to begin in Rehoboth Beach, June 3.

And weather permitting, Great Lakes Dredge and Dock Company officials said, the project should end by the first days of July.

"The pipe is now at Grenoble Place, and the crews are ready to work around the clock," said Tony Pratt, state project manager for the beach replenishment. Pratt joined Army Corps of Engineers and Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company managers, June 2, for a project update to Rehoboth Beach city officials.

"There's considerably less linear sand to pump in Rehoboth than there was in Dewey Beach, so the job will go much faster. We figure it will take two weeks of pumping to fill from Grenoble Place to Rehoboth Avenue, then another two weeks to fill from Rehoboth Avenue to the south end. By the end of June, the only work we should expect to see will be the tapering of the extreme south end and some dune-crossover construction work."

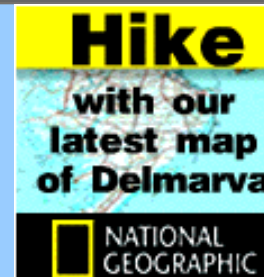
To accomplish that replenishment efficiently, Pratt said Great Lakes has revised its plan for Rehoboth Beach, using three onshore pipes instead of two. Pumping will begin first at the Grenoble Place pipe, where dozers will push the new sand to its proper elevation against the Boardwalk, then elevate it seaward to the surf line. From there, the project will start southward, building from the Boardwalk to the surf.

A second pipe will be laid next to the nearest groin at the end of Rehoboth Avenue. Beach building will move northward from that point, meeting with the

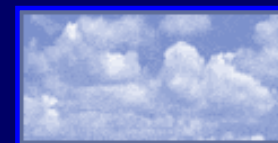
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southward beach building somewhere near Maryland Avenue, Pratt said. In mid-June, sand should start flowing through a third pipe at the beach in front of Star of the Sea Condominium. The project will fill southward from there, ending with the tapering at the south end. At the same time, sand will pump through the pipe at Grenoble Place so crews can build the taper at the north end of the beach.

The Manhattan Island dredge boat will begin work first. The Dodge Island dredge boat will join the project during the second week of June.

Manny Arana, Great Lakes' project manager, said his crews will do all they can to minimize any negative effects of the beach work. He said crews have already worked out a plan to minimize annoying beeping sounds made by dozers and loaders when they are in reverse mode.

"The beepers are federally mandated," said Arana. "They cannot be disconnected. But our crew has a plan that will minimize their use during the evening and early morning hours. They've worked out logistics that will enable them to do their work without going into reverse and causing the beeping. The dozers don't work much at all during the night, so that should not be a problem then. During the day, the beeping isn't as obvious or annoying, because there's so much other sound."

Arana said he is confident this phase of the huge Dewey Beach-Rehoboth Beach replenishment project will roll along quickly and be completed in time.

He also said his crews have agreed to keep the actual job site compacted to a width of 300 to 400 feet that will be cordoned off to keep the public safe.

"We'll be moving about 200 feet a day," said Arana. "The cordoned area will move, and people are welcome to set up their camp at the edge of the cordon. You'll be surprised. A lot of people are attracted to the work site. They like to see the beach being built."

Arana said there would be little inconvenience to bathers and sunbathers. "Unlike in Dewey Beach, you have the Boardwalk. People can walk easily past the work site to set their beach towels.

Rehoboth Beach City Manager Greg Ferrese said he has not received any complaints about the project yet.

"We're confident Great Lakes is getting started in earnest now," said Rehoboth

Beach Mayor Sam Cooper. “We just want to get the word out. We want people who visit to have good information on what’s going on, why the beach is being replenished and when it will be completed.”

Pratt was asked why the project began in January instead of last fall, which would have enabled a completion before Memorial Day. “Because we had property owners who held out on signing their easements,” he said. “That held us up and caused the delay. Everything else was ready to go last summer. But we had the holdouts, and we had to negotiate with them and their lawyers. We went through September before they finally signed the easements allowing us to move ahead. If we’d had those easements last summer, we could have started the job in the fall and been done by May.”

Rehoboth Beach Patrol Capt. Kent Buckson said his guards would help patrol for safety around the work sites. Buckson said that, traditionally, few people use the beach during June weekdays. “The beaches fill a little bit on June weekends, but not nearly as much as they do during July and August.”

“There’s not much existing beach right now,” said Arana. “What you will see when the job is done will be mostly all new sand.”

Arana said the groins – or jetties - would be completely covered by the replenishment sand. Pratt said the shipwrecks in the surf in front of Star of the Sea would also be covered, although he has taken global positioning satellite (GPS) readings on the metal-hulled Tracey and will always know where it is.

“Whether or not the city decides to reopen that section of the beach for bathers will be up to city commissioners,” said Pratt.

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